

## CHP lays out plan for a safe July 4 celebration

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LAKE COUNTY &ndash; As motorists prepare to head out onto the highway for some summer fun this Independence Day, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) is doing its part to help keep the fireworks where they belong &hellip; in the sky. And with some advance planning, the CHP hopes this can be a safe celebration for everyone.

&ldquo;Plan ahead and allow extra time for travel on busy roads, buckle up before you head out and don&rsquo;t speed,&rdquo; reminded CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. &ldquo;Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves or react to hazards in the roadway.&rdquo;

Fourth of July weekend is a Maximum Enforcement Period (MEP) for the CHP.

All available officers will patrol the roadways during the MEP, which begins at 6 p.m. Friday, July 3, and extends until midnight on Sunday, July 5.

Last year over the three-day, Fourth of July weekend, 41 people died on California&rsquo;s roadways; nearly half of those killed in CHP jurisdiction were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash, and one motorcyclist who died was without a helmet.

&ldquo;Many of those deaths could have been easily avoided by taking a moment to buckle a seat belt,&rdquo; stated Commissioner Farrow. &ldquo;Proper safety equipment takes a moment to secure and can make all the difference between walking away from a crash, or being carried away on a stretcher.&rdquo;

In addition to speeders and those who fail to buckle up, officers will be looking for drivers under the influence.

Last year, over the Fourth of July holiday, CHP officers statewide arrested 1,684 people for DUI.

&ldquo;If you&rsquo;re going to drink, do not drive,&rdquo; urged Commissioner Farrow. &ldquo;And equally important, don't get into a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking. Plan ahead and designate a non-drinking driver.&rdquo;

The Independence Day MEP is also an Operation Combined Accident Reduction Effort (CARE) holiday.

Operation CARE is a joint program of the nation&rsquo;s highway patrols that places special safety emphasis on interstate highways during holiday periods.

CARE highways in California include Interstates 80, 40, 15 and 5.